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Its success is undeniable, and they assert that places have been taken in the theatre twenty-five days in advance. That M. Carvalho is replenishing his treasury chest by the receipts accruing from the performance of "Romeo e Juliette," there is no doubt; but this is far from proof that the music is good, or the opera destined to a lasting reputation.

### REFLECTIONS, CRITICAL AND SUGGESTIVE.

BY ROBERT SCHUMANN.

[Concluded.]

MODERN SYMPHONIES, AND THE VIENNA COMPETITION OF 1839.—When a German talks about Symphonies he means Beethoven. The two things are to him inseparable, one and the same, his delight and pride. As Italy has its Naples, France its Revolution, and England its commerce, so a German has his Beethoven-Symphonies. Over Beethoven he forgets that he has no great school of painting to show; with him he regains, in spirit, all the battles that Napoleon won over us; he even ventures to put him on a level with Shakespeare. As this great master's creations have grown into our very being, and many of his Symphonies have even become popular, it is natural to suppose that they have left deep traces which would show themselves in the first works of the same kind in the age succeeding them. But this is not the case. Similarities are certainly found, and those both many and close—though it is curious that they should mostly refer to Beethoven's earliest Symphonies, as if each successive one required a certain time before it could be understood and imitated. But the power of employing and maintaining real grandeur of form, where the ideas succeed one another blow after blow, though all the while linked together by an inward spiritual connection—this, with few exceptions, is rarely to be found. Modern Symphonies for the most part sink to the level of mere overture music, especially the first movements. The slow movements are put in only because they are bound to be; the *Scherzos* are *Scherzos* in name only; and the last movements seem to have lost all knowledge of what has gone before them. Berlioz was introduced to us as a phenomenon. Germans in general knew nothing of him, and what little they knew was by hearsay, and seemed only to frighten them, so that some time will probably elapse before he becomes thoroughly known. Assuredly, however, he will not have labored in vain; for phenomena never come singly. The future is already teaching us. Franz Schubert should also be mentioned; but even his Symphonies are not yet known. The competition for the prize at Vienna afforded important evidence of the present level of talent. We may say what we like, competition can only be beneficial—it can never do harm; and those who think that the productive faculties are not roused by excitement even of a prosaic kind, are much mistaken. Had a prize for a symphony been announced during the life-time of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven—such a prize, for instance, as one of those enormous rare diamonds which are found in imperial and royal treasures—I would lay any wager that the great masters would have set to work in earnest. But, then, who could have been the judge?

MENDELSSOHN.—SYMPHONY, OP. 56.—Mendelssohn's new Symphony has been most eagerly ex-

pected by all who are watching with interest the brilliant course of this rare genius. Indeed it was looked forward to almost as his first performance in this department; for the symphony in C minor, actually the first, belongs to his very earliest youth, while the second, written for the London Philharmonic Society, is not yet published; and his "Sinfonia-Cantata" again (The Hymn of Praise) cannot be considered as a purely instrumental work. Therefore, with the exception of the Opera, the Symphony alone was wanting to complete the grand circle of his productions, since in every other branch he had already amply distinguished himself.

We have been told that this Symphony was begun many years ago, during Mendelssohn's stay in Rome, although not completed till quite recently. This fact is interesting as helping us to understand the very remarkable character of the music. As when, in some old and long-forgotten book, we suddenly discover a faded leaf which recalls the past with such vivid distinctness as to make us forget the present, so may all manner of charming recollections have crowded upon the imagination of our composer when amongst his papers he came upon these melodies inspired long ago by the beauties of Italy, and consciously or unconsciously formed them into the lovely picture now before us—a picture which, like Jean Paul's description of Italy in his "Titan," is enough to make one forget for a time even one's regret at not having seen that blessed country. How completely the whole symphony is pervaded by a specially national tone has often been observed—indeed, the observation could escape no one with any imagination. But it is the extraordinary charm of its coloring which gives to Mendelssohn's work, as to Schubert's C major, its special place in the world of Symphonies. Of the instrumental pathos, or spurious breadth now so common, or indeed of anything like an exaggeration of Beethoven there is not a trace. It comes nearer in character to Schubert's Symphony just mentioned, with the difference that, while *that* suggests a wild gipsy life, *this* transports us to Italian skies. Its charms are of a more refined order, and it addresses us in more familiar language than Schubert's, though on the other hand, we frankly allow to the latter a superiority in certain points, especially a greater force of invention.

In its plan, this Symphony is remarkable for the intimate connection of all the four movements. Even the melodies working out of the principal subjects is relatively the same in the four, as will be seen by the most hasty comparison. Thus, more than any other Symphony, it forms one compact whole, the separate movements of which are closely related in character, key, and rhythm. It is the composer's wish (as expressed in the prefatory notice) that there should only be a short interval between each movement.

Looked at from a purely musical point of view, there can be no doubt about the great perfection of the work. In the beauty and delicacy both of its general structure and of its individual parts, it ranks with his Overtures, while it is not less rich in charming instrumental effects. Every page of the score gives fresh proof of the skill with which he can bring back a previous thought, or disguise the return of the subject so as to put it in an entirely new light, or of the power of making his details rich and interesting, without exaggeration or Philistine mock-learning.

The effect of the work on the public will partly depend on the efficiency of the orchestra. No doubt this is always the case, but doubly so here, because force is not so much wanted as finished delicacy in the separate instruments, and especially in the wind. The most irresistible effect is in the *scherzo*, and I doubt whether a *scherzo* more full of genius has been written in modern times; the instruments converse in it almost like human beings. The conclusion of the *finale* is sure to excite difference of opinion; many will expect it to be in the character of the rest of the last movement, instead of which it recalls the opening of the first, and thus rounds off the entire work into symmetry. To me it is a most poetical ending, like a sunset recalling a lovely sunrise.

The pianoforte arrangement is by the composer himself, and is as faithful a version as can well be imagined, though for all that it often conveys but half the charm of the orchestral effect.

### ORCHESTRA AND STALLS.

My Lady Maude sits in her stall,  
And I stand here waiting the fall  
Of Costa's baton; ah well! with all

My fortune spent, what could I do,  
I could not dig, and not a Jew  
Would put his faith in an I O U.

An amateur not long ago,  
Both times and friends have changed, and so  
I earn my bread in a way deemed "low."

But ah! I try to play my best,  
For my old love comes with the rest—  
A little gem on her heaving breast:

(A little gem I know full well;  
A gem of which I tales could tell,  
Though "but a fiddler" waiting the bell.)

The old man dozing by her side  
Looks in the face of his young bride  
With feelings strange of terror and pride,

And wonders why the music's strain  
Into her face calls bitter pain,  
And pitiful looks of self-disdain.

The music is not what it seems,  
A sad song 'tis of young love's dreams  
Wafted by the sweet Pactolian streams

By which we strayed with footsteps slow:  
The sky without a shade of woe—  
When we loved so fondly years ago.

But yet I think I've less of care  
Than yon old man with whitened hair,  
The buyer of that sweet face so fair.

For though I'm lost in change of name,  
I live in her sweet thoughts the same—  
But hush for "*Robert toi que j'aime*."

JAS. BOWKER.